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IN
A
NUTSHELL

AGNES
BOSS
THOMAS



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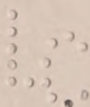
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IN A NUTSHELL

Stories for Children

BY

AGNES BOSS THOMAS



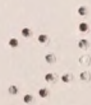
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CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---------------------------------|------|
| IN SCHOOL | 1 |
| THE GOLDEN BALL | 5 |
| THE GODDESS OF SPRING | 11 |
| THE GLORIOUS DREAM | 17 |
| MR. AND MRS. GOBBLER | 23 |
| THE INVISIBLE SANTA CLAUS | 27 |
| “SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN” | 31 |

IN SCHOOL

IN SCHOOL

Jamie saw a firefly on a violet. He picked the violet and put it in a bottle.

That night, when he went to bed, he took the bottle with him. He watched the light of the firefly a long time. It made him go to sleep. Then, somehow, he was in the bottle with the violet and the firefly.

"How are you, Jamie?" nodded the violet.

"I knew you would join us," hummed the firefly.

"Isn't this funny to be inside a bottle!" exclaimed Jamie. "Why, I'm not any bigger than either of you!"

"I think it's fine," said the firefly. "It's just like being in a crystal palace."

"But how can we play?" asked Jamie.

"Oh," smiled the violet, "we can play school."

"No," gurgled the bottle, "I don't want to. I'm only in the mineral kindergarten so I'm not as smart as you."

"What's he talking about?" laughed Jamie.

IN A NUTSHELL

“What! don’t you remember when you were like us? How strange! But I will tell you if you wish.”

“Oh, please do!” urged Jamie.

“Well,” began Miss Violet, “Mr. Bottle is in the mineral kindergarten, I am in the vegetable kindergarten, Mr. Firefly is in the animal kindergarten and you are in the human kindergarten. That makes four grades with you at the top.”

“Oh,” chuckled Jamie, “isn’t that queer!”

“Well, it’s true. This bottle isn’t supposed to be alive, but we know it is. After it gets through being a bottle and lots of other things it is old enough to graduate from the first grade. Then it enters the second grade where I am.”

“Now,” continued Miss Violet, “I was a tiny seed way down in the dark damp earth. Do you think I wanted to stay there and never see sunshine? Not much. I went to work and sprouted. Up I shot, right to the surface of the ground. Then I made leaves for myself. After I looked round the world awhile and saw the sunshine and the blue sky, I thought I’d like to make a flower just as blue as the sky. So I did and here I am! Don’t you think I’m lovely? That’s what we learn to do in the vegetable kindergarten. Mr. Bottle will make himself into a violet, too, some day.”

“Yes,” interrupted Mr. Firefly, “when Miss

IN SCHOOL

Violet is old enough to graduate from the second grade she will enter the animal kindergarten. That's the third grade. I'm in the third grade," bragged Mr. Firefly, "because I've learned to be a bug. I can think, too. When I first got my thinker going I said: 'You don't want to be just a common little bug. You want to do good in the world.' So I thought and thought and thought till I got an idea. It was to make a bright light. I made the light. Now the flowers smile at me, and little boys and girls run to catch me. When I want to hide I put out my light. Then they cannot find me. Don't you think I'm smart? By and by, after I've been a lot of things like bigger bugs, I can grow into butterflies and birds and the like, then, after a long, long time, become a fairy. But I've made up my mind not to do that. Instead, I'm going to grow into an animal; possibly a cat, or a dog, or a cow, or a horse. I get smarter all the time. Then, when I'm so smart I cannot stand it any longer, I graduate from my animal kindergarten into your school, Jamie, which is the fourth grade. Now what do think of that? I become human just like you. Perhaps a little boy, who knows! Isn't that wonderful?"

"Yes," agreed Jamie, "but what am I growing into all this time?"

IN A NUTSHELL

“Oh,” chimed Mr. Bottle, Miss Violet and Mr. Firefly, “you grow more and more beautiful. You get old, die, then rest awhile. By and by you come back on earth a baby again. Then you grow old and die like you did before. Oh, you keep dying and dying and being born and being born lots of times. Only, Jamie, each time you are born you are more beautiful than ever before. Yes, you are not only more beautiful but stronger and nobler of character. At last you are so grand—what do you think happens? Why, you become a glorious angel who can do anything and go anywhere. That’s what you’re going to be if you try to be a good little boy. Now, isn’t this a wonderful world?”

“Well it sure is!” gasped Jamie.

THE GOLDEN BALL

THE GOLDEN BALL

“Jamie, do you know what is meant by the saying, ‘Shun evil companions’?”

“Oh, yes, mother. It means not to go with bad boys.”

“No, sonny, it doesn’t mean that at all,” returned mother. “Your closest companions are your thoughts. It means, ‘Shun evil thoughts.’”

“Oh!” exclaimed Jamie; then after awhile, “Mother, what does ‘shun’ mean?”

“Shun,” explained mother, “means to keep away from. When a bad, wicked thought pops into your head, you say: ‘What right have you in my clean, young body? Get right out! Don’t you know I’m a child of God?’ Begin right off to think of some one you love. Then you will be making beautiful thought forms. And Jamie, these thought forms live just as long as you keep feeling and thinking them, and they grow big and strong near you until they become your companions. For instance, if you love your mother and father and all your little play-mates you keep feeling love, which makes you think love. Each of these thoughts grows into a beautiful

IN A NUTSHELL

form. This form lives in the air about you. It has a pretty color, too. Every time you feel love for anyone or kindness toward anything this little companion gets still more powerful. But if you do not feel love in your heart, you forget to be kind and the unseen companion dies. It lives by your loving thoughts only. It is just the same with bad thoughts. When they pop into your head, don't think them again; shut them out—quick! Then they go to pieces. Now do you understand why thoughts are your real companions? Don't you see they are with you always,—even more than playmates?"

"I believe I do," replied Jamie.

His mother left him in the library cuddled in a big leather chair.

Jamie wondered and wondered about what his mother had just told him. All at once he saw a most remarkable sight.

Standing right in front of him was the ugliest little creature he had ever seen. It was of a dark, muddy color, and had no head; its body was small and flat but with long arms and legs dangling out of it. Oh, the longest arms and the longest legs you ever could imagine! The queer little hands on the long, long arms pulled Jamie's hair, pinched his nose and yanked at his clothes.

THE GOLDEN BALL

“Ha, ha, ha!” it shrieked. “Ha, ha, ha! don’t you know me? Why, I’m the thought you made when you pulled your kitty’s tail. You pulled it so hard that the kitty cried, but you didn’t care, you just laughed and kept pulling. Ha, ha, ha! that made my arms grow long.” And the creature pinched Jamie’s nose just awful hard. “Then, in school, you pulled Dorothy’s braids and Susie’s curls until they told the teacher. That made my arms still longer and stronger!” And he pulled Jamie’s nose again. “Yes, and you didn’t come straight home from school; you ran away. Oh, how that made my legs grow! Why, just look at ’em—look at ’em! They can walk everywhere, just like my arms can reach anywhere.”

“Get out of my way!” hissed, what Jamie thought, a streak of red lightning.

“Oh!” quivered the terrified Jamie.

“Yes, oh!” mimicked this streak of red lightning, twisting itself upside down, down side up, in and out and round about so swiftly that it made a whizzing sound that caused Jamie’s hair to stand on end in very fright.

“Oh, ho! so you don’t like me, Master Jamie?” it whizzed. “What did you make me for then? I belong to you. Yes I do—yes I do! Don’t you remember how angry you were a little while ago? Oh,

IN A NUTSHELL

—but you were angry! You stamped your foot and cried: ‘I won’t, I won’t, I won’t!’ I’m that angry thought. Every time you cried ‘I won’t!’ you made me redder and redder and redder.” Ziz-ziz-ziz, and to Jamie’s surprise, the thing turned over and faded away.

Then he remembered what his mother had told him about making these evil companions. So right then and there he decided to try and make only beautiful thought companions.

He sat very still in the big leather chair and thought what a fortunate little boy he was with his dear mother and father and his comfortable home; his schoolmates and his kind teacher. But, after a little, his thoughts returned to his mother—his sweet, precious mother. Oh, how he loved her!

Suddenly, Jamie sat bolt upright, for he saw the most marvelous little form! Why, it came right out of his head, he was sure! It was a shining, sparkling, golden ball with the loveliest rose colored wings! Yes, beautiful, tiny rose-pink wings. As he watched it, it occurred to him that this golden ball must be the thought form he had just made from his love for his dear mother. That was it. But look! it was going right out of the library into the next room.

Jamie sprang from his chair, and running to his mother, cried:

THE GOLDEN BALL

“Mother, oh mother, do you see it? Do you see it?”

“See what, my boy?”

“Why, the golden ball just over your head! Oh, it’s gone, mother—it’s gone!”

“Never mind, my son, even if I did not see it,”—taking him in her arms,—“mother felt it sink right into her heart. And that is almost like seeing it,—don’t you think so?”

THE GODDESS OF SPRING

THE GODDESS OF SPRING

“I am Eostra, goddess of Spring,” announced little Miss Helen, as she seated herself on the roof of the summer-house. “This stick is my wand, this summer-house is my throne and you, Jamie, with Rover and Bounce, are my subjects.”

“Oh,” ejaculated the delighted Jamie, looking up at her in wide-eyed admiration immensely flattered that the beautiful Helen, who was four whole years older, should wish to play with him, especially on this Easter morning. “Oh,” he repeated, knowing how the big boys would envy him.

“Yes,” continued Miss Helen, spreading out the lacy flounces of her Easter finery, “as my subject you cannot come up here, ‘approach the throne,’ as they say in books. No, you must stay on the ground and worship me.”

But how do I worship you?” ventured Jamie, somewhat crestfallen.

“Fall on your knees,” commanded Miss Helen, with a wave of her wand. “Rover, Rover, sit up! That’s right. Bounce, here Bounce—” But the disobedient Bounce bounded off quite unceremoniously.

IN A NUTSHELL

“Now,” resumed the little lady, “when I wave my wand you bow to the ground, but while I am speaking you may remain on your knees.”

“All right,” agreed Jamie.

“But perhaps you do not know about Eostra, goddess of Spring?” suggested Helen.

“No,” came from the ground.

“Well, a long, long time ago, oh, so long ago that it was before our Jesus came on earth, the people used to celebrate the coming of Spring. When the trees began to bud, and the flowers, which had been sleeping all winter, broke through the soft earth, and the cold wind grew warm with raindrops, and the birds returned to their summer nests, the people would say:

“‘Eostra, goddess of Spring, is here. Come, we will celebrate in her honor.’”

“Then all the people would stop work and join in the weaving of flower wreaths and long garlands with which to crown themselves and decorate their cities. After all was made ready the celebration began with wonderful music and dancing and singing, the people joining in one grand song of joy that the goddess of Spring had awakened the Earth Mother from the long winter’s sleep.”

“Where did you learn all that?” asked Jamie.

“From the books in our library,” confided Helen.

THE GODDESS OF SPRING

“And I tell it just like the books, too. You see, I have read it so many times I can remember.”

“Do you know any more?” questioned the devoted Jamie, still on his knees.

“Yes, I know lots more. Be still and I will tell you,” admonished the goddess from her throne.

“But my feet have gone to sleep. Won’t you let me sit cross-legged?” begged her humble subject.

“Very well. Now listen.” And Miss Helen bobbed her queenly head, waved her wand and proceeded with her story.

“A long time after this, at the supposed age of thirty years, the Master Jesus came among the people to teach them. His teachings are called a religion, and His religion is named Christian. After three years of teaching, Jesus, who was an Oriental Jew, was killed by His own people. His body was laid in a sepulchre or tomb. Nowadays when people die, their friends send gifts of flowers, but in Jesus’ time the gifts were of spices and ointments. So a few of Jesus’ followers, wishing to make this gift of spices and ointments, went, early in the morning of the third day after His death, to the tomb. To their amazement they found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus gone! But the books say that two men in shining garments stood by and told them

IN A NUTSHELL

not to be afraid for Jesus had but risen from the dead and gone to His Father in heaven."

"I know all that," interrupted Jamie.

"Years passed," continued Miss Helen, ignoring Master Jamie's remark. "By and by the people grew tired of the simple teachings of Jesus, and decided to set a day on which they could celebrate His ascent into heaven. So they borrowed the word 'E-o-s-t-r-a' and made it E-a-s-t-e-r. But they could not decide about this day. The Jewish Christians wanted one time, and the Gentile Christians, another. For years and years it was not settled. Finally, the Roman Catholic Church decided in favor of the Gentiles, who chose the day we now celebrate as Easter. And it really depends on the sun and the moon!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Jamie, greatly surprised.

"But Jamie, all this is only what is called the *form* side of Easter. The real, real Easter is something quite different." And Jamie noticed that Helen's voice had become very gentle and her lovely face, even lovelier still.

"Would you mind telling me the real side, too?" coaxed Jamie, rather timidly.

Helen hesitated a moment. Jamie was afraid she was going to cry. But she only smiled and said:

THE GODDESS OF SPRING

“The real side of Easter, Jamie, is to have love in your heart. Oh, a love so beautiful that you feel love for all instead of for just those who love you. I am trying to feel that way and I believe I do. That is why, Jamie dear, I am playing with you this morning instead of with my big playmates. For to really feel Easter I must love everybody and everything, be always kind and thoughtful, and take pleasure in playing with the little boys and girls as well as with the others.”

“Oh,” exclaimed Jamie, “won’t you please feel Easter every day?”

“That’s just it,” said Helen, “when we grow to be more like our Lord Jesus we will feel Easter **EVERY DAY** instead of just once a year!”

“Why, Helen, I believe you know almost as much as my mother,” concluded Jamie, wishing to pay her the greatest compliment possible.

“That’s because I’m an ‘old soul’,” returned the queenly Helen, descending from her throne.

THE GLORIOUS DREAM

THE GLORIOUS DREAM

“You can play, Jamie, if you will only practice. Even though you are such a small boy, you know music.”

“But, teacher, I do practice. I practice and practice and practice. I feel the music inside of me, but when I try to play it, it is gone.”

“If you feel the music or hear it in your heart, why can’t you play it while you listen? I don’t understand why you accomplish so little.”

“I don’t either, teacher. Mother takes me to the concerts to help me, but oh, it just makes me feel like the song. It is shut tight in my heart, but I try hard to get it out!”

The teacher looked gravely distressed and his keen disappointment made Jamie unhappy. For even more than the desire to play little pieces, the lad yearned to please his teacher.

Jamie lingered at the piano, his legs dangling from the high stool, his arms crossed over the silent keys.

“When I try so hard, oh why, *why* can’t I play?” he sobbed, burying his face in his arms. “The music

IN A NUTSHELL

is in my heart, oh, I know the music is in my heart!" Tears bathed his cheeks, until finally, he grew still.

Little by little he found himself in the center of a great amphitheater. It was hewn from the rock in the hillside, its stone seats rising tier upon tier as in a circus. There was no roof, and in the distance could be seen the sapphire sea with soft peaked hills beyond. The theater was filled with people; thousands and thousands of people, all talking and laughing.

Presently, from the back of the stage came dancing maidens in long, white, flowing robes bordered in pink and blue, and fastened on the shoulders with golden clasps.

The talking and laughter ceased, all was hushed, and in the waiting stillness the people leaned eagerly forward. For standing in the center of the stage was a radiant Youth, his arms outstretched and lips apart, and crowned with a wreath of wild olive. He wore a short, white chiton girded by a belt of gold, and his comely limbs were half concealed by strange, high shoes laced at the sides. He smiled, a glad rare smile, and bowed. The great audience cheered a welcome. They loved him; he was their favorite, their idol, their song-bird! Then in that vast place his song arose, clear, pure, triumphant, its wondrous tones soaring into the sky and out where

THE GLORIOUS DREAM

the sea played. And as he sang, the maidens danced slowly to illustrate his song.

Now Jamie, watching from above, fancied himself the Youth; for straightway he thought as the Youth thought, felt as the Youth felt, loved the music, thrilled to it, knew it and, like the Youth, was lost in a paradise of song. The music ended, the people applauded, the Youth bowed, then looked straight at Jamie. O, he was the same! Jamie was the Youth!—as he had lived in a life of the long ago!

Then all was darkness. But gradually, another vision came.

Pestilence had fallen on a great city. The dead and dying crowded the houses, the temples, the streets, forsaken by kinsmen and friends, for they had fled in terror. Hundreds of the sick lay in the streets, moaning, burning with fever and parched for water, while the few who could yet move, dragged themselves to the city wells to quench their thirst.

In a temple, the center of a group of priests and high officials, was the Youth. On the faces of all, save his, was a look of fear and dread. They were asking the Singer to go out among the doomed people to try, by the charm of his wondrous voice to allay the disease. Gladly, joyously, the Youth went forth, happy in the thought that he could relieve the suffering. For long, weary hours he carried

IN A NUTSHELL

water here, there, everywhere, and sang the loved melodies until he, too, fell in the street.

His beloved mother, also yearning to help the people, had left her abode to bring water to the sufferers. Kneeling to comfort one in pain, she lifted his head that he might drink, and lo! it was her son! her darling boy! O God! must he, too, die? The Youth opened his eyes and smiled a rare, sweet greeting. Even in his pain, happiness shone from his face, for he knew that his young life had been given to the helpless. And the mother, understanding, smiled through her tears, clasped her arms about him, and with her kiss, the Youth expired.

“Jamie, Jamie, look at mother, please look at mother!”

Slowly the color returned to Jamie's cheeks, and as slowly he opened his eyes. He was in his mother's arms; she was bending over to kiss him. He looked into her eyes, long and steadily. They were the eyes of that mother of the long ago, and he had been the great singer who had died among the people. His little heart fluttered with joy and he smiled and kissed this loved mother, who seemed so close to him now. Then he told her the glorious dream. Together they talked it over; of the past and of the future, and in that golden hour the soul of both mother and child responded to the call of the

THE GLORIOUS DREAM

Master; to live even as He had lived, in glad service for others.

“Then, mother, does it matter if I cannot play the music?”

“No, sonny, no.”

“And, mother, you and I will serve so the dream will come true?”

“Oh, my boy, we will serve and *make the dream come true!*”

MR. AND MRS. GOBBLER

MR. AND MRS. GOBBLER

“Gobble, gobble, gobble?” called a big papa turkey to the mama turkeys in their group soul of the spirit world.

“Gobble, gobble, gobble,” echoed the mama turkeys.

“This is the day that human people call Thanksgiving,” began Mr. Turkey Gobbler.

“Gobble, gobble, gobble,” wailed the mama turkeys.

“And this is the day that they go into churches to thank their God for all their blessings,” continued Papa Turkey. “Yet they have killed turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese and even pigs!”

“Gobble, gobble, gobble,” moaned the mama turkeys.

“Most of all they have killed us, the papa and mama turkeys, and taken us from our children. These were left over to grow fatter and juicer. By next year our babies will be old enough and fat enough and juicy enough for these awful creatures to devour. Then the necks of our children will be chopped off as heartlessly as they chopped our own.”

IN A NUTSHELL

“Gobble, gobble, gobble!” shrieked the mama turkeys, in great excitement.

“The reason of my calling you,” resumed the speaker, “was to try and see if we could not help these human animals who murdered us.”

Whereupon the mama turkeys shook their heads doubtingly.

“Nay, shake not your heads,” warned the proud Mr. Turkey. “We must not blame these human creatures, for they are ignorant—terribly ignorant. Why, they are still chopping off each other’s heads—hanging, they call it—if one of them does wrong, so what can we turkeys expect from them? And yet, they think themselves the wisest of God’s children! They have even forgotten their great ancestors, the Spartans, who were the strongest of people, didn’t kill animals or birds. No, these Spartans were what humans call vegetarians. They lived on grains and vegetables and fruits. So did the great Roman athletes. Then these later human creatures wonder why the vegetarians beat the meat eaters in their big, big college contests!

“Why, just a short time ago a man named Roosevelt—Colonel Roosevelt—decided to go to Africa to kill animals. Think of it! So what did these human creatures do but hold prayer meetings just to ask God to keep this Roosevelt-man safe from

MR. AND MRS. GOBBLER

bears and lions and tigers and birds and things! They never cared about the poor animals, at all. No! Why shouldn't the bears and lions and tigers and birds and things hold prayer meetings and offer prayers to God to be kept safe from this human coming to destroy them?

"So patience, patience, mother turkeys, and forgive them—poor things! Some day they will know that to take a life, however small, is neither necessary nor kind. And now that we are gathered together on this Thanksgiving killing day, let us, out of the fullness of our turkey-hearts, pray for our erring brethren."

"Gobble, gobble, gobble," solemnly assented the mama turkeys, bowing their heads.

"Dear God of Turkeyland," prayed Mr. Gobbler, "let Thy light so shine on those who kill and eat us, that, before another year is ended, they may turn from their sinful and ignorant ways."

"Gobble, gobble, gobble," murmured the mama turkeys in benediction.

THE INVISIBLE SANTA CLAUS

THE INVISIBLE SANTA CLAUS

“Oh, mother,” called Jamie, rushing into the house from school, “Jack says there isn’t any Santa Claus, that Santa Claus isn’t real at all! He says mamas and papas tell their little children that just for fun, and when we all get big we find out it isn’t true! Mother, there really is a Santa Claus, isn’t there? You wouldn’t say there is one if it isn’t true, would you, mother?”

“Certainly I would not,” returned his mother. “Jack does not know, that is all. The truth is, Jamie dear, that Santa Claus is so great and glorious that mother has waited until you could understand about him. I know you believe your mother above anyone else, so I will tell you right now what Santa Claus really is.

“Many years after Jesus, the Christ, had died, His followers, who had been made very happy by His coming among them, wished to set aside one day in the year in which to celebrate His birth and show their love and gratitude for the light He had brought them. As Jesus’ birthday was unknown, one hundred and thirty-six different days were pro-

IN A NUTSHELL

posed. Finally one was chosen, the twenty-fifth day of December. This day had always been a day of celebration among all ancient races. It was the great day in the year when all the people joined in devotional ceremonies to the God of Nature. So you see, my little boy, that the day meant to those other ancient people the yearly birth of the sun as it began its journey northward after ripening the harvest away in the South-land. As the sun gives light, and Jesus, the Christ, brought Light to the people by His teachings, is it not beautiful that the people chose this for the birthday of Jesus? You know that He is also called the Christ, and that He said we must love one another. Therefore, the day of days when all people try to think only thoughts of love and kindness is Christ's day or Christmas day. And when we think and feel these beautiful thoughts, by and by there creeps into our hearts the wish to give something to others, so that all may share in our joy. Now this is just how these people felt, for shortly after they had chosen the Christmas day, they began giving gifts. As an explanation of these love-presents they said the gifts came from the Christ-Child who, on Christmas eve, passed over all the houses in the land."

"This was true, but we must understand its real meaning. It did not mean that the great Christ came

THE INVISIBLE SANTA CLAUS

to earth dropping presents on the housetops, but it did mean that Christ came knocking, knocking at the door of the hearts of His people and said:

“ ‘I am Love; please, may I come in?’ ”

“And the people said, ‘Enter.’ ”

“Then Christ entered their hearts, and lo! their hearts were so filled with love and joy that they gave to all around them.”

“The next thing these people felt the need of, was a name for this wonderful love that came to them on Christmas day. So what do you think they did? They took from the wise Dutch people the word ‘Sinter Kaas,’ which means St. Nicholas, and made it Santa Claus. So right then and there Santa Claus was born. And Santa Claus is made of all the happy, joyous, generous, loving thoughts that Christ draws from the hearts of His followers through the many, many years since He first knocked there. Isn’t that beautiful?” asked his mother.

“Yes, mother, but why can’t we see Santa Claus?” questioned Jamie.

“Since Santa Claus is made of love, he is a thought Santa Claus. He lives in the world of ether, so is invisible. That is, we cannot see him any more than we can see the fairies, or Christ’s angels, or Christ Himself. You know we cannot see Christ with our two physical eyes, but we can feel Him in our hearts.

IN A NUTSHELL

Neither can we see Santa Claus, but we know when he comes and whispers:

“ ‘Give, give, give, little Jamie; give, give, give, little Jack!’

“Then you and Jack perk up your ears, run to look up the chimney or out of the windows, and finally call to your mothers:

“ ‘Why, I believe I heard Santa Claus!’

“Of course you heard him; he had just breathed love into your hearts.”

“Oh, mother,” burst out Jamie, “how I should love to see him!”

“Perhaps, some day, if you keep your thoughts clean and good, you will see him, for we can see only that which we are like. And to feel his presence at Christmas time we must have beautiful love in our hearts. And if we believe that just one of our thoughts makes a thought-form which lives awhile in the invisible world doing either harm or good, just think then, of the glory, and grandeur, and power of the great Santa Claus! Yes, Santa Claus, who has been made from the pure, unselfish love-thoughts of some 500,000,000 people each year, for nearly 2,000 years—is a real Santa Claus.”

“Oh, mother, mother,” cried Jamie, “how very won-der-ful!”

“ SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN ”

“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN”

“No, Jamie, I don’t believe in fairies. I don’t believe in anything I cannot see.”

“Then, grandmother, do you believe in God?”

“Why of course I believe in God, Jamie. What a question to ask your grandmother!”

“But, grandmother, you said you didn’t believe in anything you couldn’t see, and you cannot see God.”

“Jamie, I’ll have no more words with you. If your mother continues to teach you heathenism I tremble for your future. When I was a girl if a mother taught a little child such rubbish she’d be burned at the stake.”

“I don’t think that would be kind, do you, grandmother? It wouldn’t be Christian.”

“That’s all you know about it, Jamie.”

“But, grandmother, don’t you think it would make Lord Jesus and Lord Buddha and Lord Zoroaster feel badly?”

“Child, how dare you name heathen gods in the

IN A NUTSHELL

same breath with our Lord Jesus? Go to your mother. I'll have no more words with you."

That night when mother put Jamie to bed she wondered at his thoughtfulness.

Jamie knew mother noticed, but he wouldn't tell what grandmother had said. He was afraid it might bother mother. Anyway, what difference did it make? Didn't he know fairies were real? Just because he couldn't see them, didn't prove anything. He couldn't see God either; but he knew there was a God. And he was sure it was awfully wicked to kill anybody. It wasn't Christian. Being a Christian was to be as kind to others as you were to yourself and not to think yourself better than others because you worshipped Lord Jesus instead of some other Great Master. For there were lots of beautiful religions in the world, he was sure: he had heard his mother say so. She said it didn't make any difference whether you were a Christian or a Buddhist or a Zoroastrian, just so there was love in your heart. Didn't he know it was wicked to speak evil of any one and to keep away from a person because you thought him not quite so fine as you? He thought the fellows would call such people cads. Anyway, they couldn't have much faith, he was sure. But he had faith—yes. Then if he had faith, why couldn't he go to Lord Jesus and ask Him all about these

“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN”

things? Why, of course he could! He would ask the the fairies to help him. And he would take grandmother, too. Then, perhaps, she would believe.

Thus, Jamie fell asleep.

The soft air was like perfume and full of music. Jamie, holding grandmother by the hand, found himself gliding through the sky, which wasn't sky at all, but a beautiful dream-world of wondrous colors; oh, colors glowing everywhere; and flowers, too. Jamie wondered if they were the beauty-thoughts of the fairies who were floating all about him. He noticed that the fairies' talk was real music, and their smiles made rainbow colors which shone from their bodies and gave Jamie a strange new strength. They passed fairy cities, shadowy forests, crystal mountains, sparkling lakes, and everywhere there was happiness. Jamie was so joyous he wished to share his joy with grandmother, but she was asleep. He tried ever so hard to awaken her, but somehow she couldn't wake up. Just the same he continued to hold her hand.

On they floated. On, on, higher and higher, the fairies circling round and round Jamie in their flight. On, on, up, beyond, above fairyland to where the sweet air was sweeter still; the heavenly music more heavenly; the divine colors more divine. And there shone from each fairy-body a light, the

IN A NUTSHELL

like of which Jamie had never seen before. These lights grew and grew and flooded Jamie, and passing through his body, gave him new strength, greater courage, more faith, until Jamie was so happy it seemed as if he would burst with very joy.

Slowly the mists opened, the sky cleared, and in the heavenly space a great throne was. The throne was made of the lights which shone from the bodies of those round about. In the center of this throne of light, stood a Person. She was robed in pure white raiment, her short hair white as the driven snow, and on her uplifted hand a heavy ring was worn.

In ecstasy, Jamie leaned forward to look the closer. But lo! as he gazed a strange thing happened. For the eyes were no longer her eyes; the hair, no longer her hair; the raiment, no longer her raiment; instead—the Master stood!

He gazed round about and in His gaze was a smile, and His smile was life, and the life passed through all, illuminating each until the light became a glow-wonder. And to Jamie the Master spoke with divine gentleness:

“Thou hast come, My son, and it pleaseth Me. Thy faith hath brought thee hither, as it bringeth all who believeth in Me. It is well. Go thou back into the world and lead the life, and leading the life

“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN”

serve Me, and serving Me thou shalt learn of Me and be one in Me, even as I am one with the Father.”

Jamie awakened. How well he felt, and strong! How bright the sun, how light his heart! He sang all his little songs while dressing, so very, very happy was he. He tried to remember his dreams, but he could not. Just the same he knew something great must have happened, for the love-fairies flooded his heart!

As he entered the breakfast room and took his place at the table, the family seemed to feel a certain rare joy and illumination which shone from his young face. It made grandmother sit straighter in her chair and uncle more patient than usual. And when his uncle asked the blessing, Jamie thought he never prayed so well before, and, encouraged by this new gentleness, asked:

“Please, uncle, may I say my little prayer, too?”

“Why, certainly, my boy, certainly.”

So grandmother and uncle and auntie and mother, too, bowed their heads. Jamie, raising his child-face to the morning sunshine, said:

“I send my love to the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, the human kingdoms. I love all and I hope all love me. I forgive all and I hope all forgive me. I send my love to the north, to the south, to the east, to the west. May I do well this day.”

IN A NUTSHELL

And grandmother, with tears in her eyes but a new found joy in her heart, murmured: “ ‘And a little child shall lead them.’ Amen.”

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